

## COLPOSCOPY INSTRUCTIONS

### What is a colposcopy?

Colposcopy is a way of looking at the cervix under magnification using a colposcope. This allows your provider to see potentially abnormal cells of the cervix that cannot be seen by the eye alone.

### Why do I need a colposcopy?

Your provider may call you to inform you that your pap smear screening results were abnormal. Because the pap smear is a screening test, and NOT diagnostic, they may recommend a colposcopy for diagnostic evaluation.

### When should I schedule the colposcopy?

It is best to schedule a colposcopy when you are NOT on your period. We also recommend that you avoid using vaginal medications, having sex and using tampons for at least 24 hours before your colposcopy appointment.

### How does the provider perform the colposcopy?

The colposcopy is performed in our office. The speculum will be used to see the cervix, just as it was used to perform your pap smear. Then the provider will use the colposcope to see your cervix under magnification. Then a mild solution is applied to the cervix with a cotton swab. This solution allows the provider to see potentially abnormal areas on the cervix more easily. If potentially abnormal areas are seen, your provider will perform a biopsy to remove a small fragment of tissue from the cervix. Sometimes more than one biopsy is needed. Your provider may also need to sample the cells within the canal of the cervix and will perform an endocervical curettage (ECC). Your provider will then apply additional medications and/or solutions to the biopsy site(s) to help control any bleeding that may occur.

### What should I expect and what restrictions will I have after I have a colposcopy?

You may have some bleeding and/or dark discharge after the colposcopy, especially if you had biopsies performed. We suggest that you wear a sanitary pad until this resolves. We will also advise you to avoid sex, tampons, hot tubs, swimming pools, baths and douching after a colposcopy for at least 1 week. If you experience some pain or cramping, over the counter medications may help.

